

**Key points : building blocks presentation, 1 September,
Ambassador John Quinn**

Introduction

Delighted to be here today to speak at Session 2, and for Australia to be co-sponsoring this event.

You have asked me to speak on proposals for promoting “effective measures” to phase out and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons.

Australia’s support for building blocks reflects our commitment to practical and realistic action to advance disarmament, a process which must engage NWS and nuclear weapons possessing states. This is key to promoting “effective measures”, that would result in fulfilling the commitments contained in Article VI of the NPT.

- Building disarmament by blocks can complement the pursuit of the “step by step” approach.

It also foresees the possibility of parallel and simultaneous steps.

Ultimate measures for achieving and maintaining a world without weapons will need to be multilateral

- However effective disarmament will require mutually reinforcing “building blocks” that could be or unilateral, bilateral, plurilateral, or multilateral

The reality is there are no quick fixes

- We must seek to maintain steady progress

And we also need to build a climate for further confidence and trust, especially in the current period of difficult geopolitical settings.

As we have heard today, there are a number of practical measures we should pursue to build on the 2010 NPT Action Plan and to strengthen its implementation, not least being the importance of “reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines”. Other ideas include

- Commencing and concluding negotiations on an FMCT, building on the important recent work of the UNGGE on this subject of which I was honoured to be a member;
- Achieving EIF of the CTBT;
- A return to substantive work of the CD;
- Strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system;
- Increasing transparency by NWS of nuclear arsenals and fissile material in stockpiles, and of their progress on disarmament;
- De-alerting; and
- Intensify efforts to develop nuclear disarmament verification capabilities, such as through the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification

NPDI

A key vehicle for Australia to progress practical, building block measures has been through the the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) , a cross regional Foreign Minister led grouping of 12 states.

- with Japan we initiated NPDI in 2010, comprising Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates
- This is not a likeminded group on all issues, but its membership shares a deep commitment to the NPT and practical action to implement it effectively.

NPT RevCon 2015

Given Australia's long history of commitment to the three pillars of the NPT, including disarmament, we shared the deep disappointment of many NPT member states that the 2015 NPT Review Conference did not achieve consensus on a final outcomes document

- right up until the last moment, we worked assiduously to secure consensus on all 184 paragraphs of the draft document
- But we were also very much aware of the formidable challenge of finding consensus on references to the proposed conference on the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone conference

- this disappointing outcome belied the reality there was a high degree of political will to keep moving forward on disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses
- there was also a clear message of pragmatic determination to continue working towards a world without nuclear weapons.
- Let me outline some tenets and ideas contained in the 2015 NPT Review Conference draft outcomes document – tenets and ideas which the NPDI, had worked hard to promote secure support for:
 - - the draft document calls for the review of military and security doctrines to reduce the role and significance of nuclear weapons (OP7) – a core issue which the NPDI has long advocated
 - it encourages the consideration of further practical measures to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems (OP9)
 - it calls on the NWS to
 - continue reporting with a high degree of specificity on nuclear warheads reductions,
 - report on de-alerting and the amounts of fissile materials held for military purposes – and
 - to improve the quality and quantity of reports to enhance transparency, (OP11)

As I mentioned at the beginning of these remarks, Australia believes that the international community should continue to demonstrate ambition in building on the 64-point Action Plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and strengthen its implementation. This is a practical and crucial contribution to our efforts to progress to global zero

- Nevertheless, while we all agree that the elimination of nuclear weapons is our ultimate objective, we do not all agree on the best way to achieve that objective
 - we will discuss a number of nuclear disarmament possibilities for progressing at the upcoming UN General Assembly a little later this afternoon.
 - Australia will look forward to working with delegations to find ways to progress nuclear disarmament at First Committee, and beyond, building on some of the ideas in the draft outcomes document, with the aim of concretising practical, building block like, initiatives.
 - With this in mind, we would be interested, for example, to explore the idea of progressing an OEWG, if this could attract broad participation, if it involved a discussion beyond simply “legal measures”, and if it could provide sufficient reassurances to those delegations that should be at the table (those possessing nuclear weapons), for them to participate. Hence, I look forward to

hearing from our Swedish colleague on their thoughts on possible UNGA 70 initiatives that would meet this criteria.

Eradication of nuclear weapons requires the building of high-level political will and trust among the nuclear-armed states, and between the NWS and non-NWS.

- As we work towards a world without nuclear weapons, it will be necessary to give further thought to how a “multilateral nuclear disarmament framework” would look like as the final “building block”.